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Chairman: Mr. Ali ..... (Malaysia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Ms. McLurg

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 128: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (*continued*)

Revised estimates resulting from resolutions adopted by the Human Rights Council at its sixth session and fifth special session in 2007
(A/62/7/Add.34 and A/62/671)

1. **Ms. Van Buerle** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the Secretary-General's report on revised estimates resulting from resolutions adopted by the Human Rights Council at its sixth session and fifth special session in 2007 (A/62/671), said that the document provided details of the budgetary requirements resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council at its sixth session and its fifth special session in 2007. Details of each of the 23 resolutions and decisions of the Council and their implications were contained in chapter II of the Secretary-General's report and had been summarized in the annex. The net additional requirements of $719,100 had been accommodated within the appropriation for the biennium 2006-2007 and had been reported in the context of the second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007.

2. For the biennium 2008-2009, of the estimated requirements of $2,916,000, an amount of $2,449,300 had been included in the programme budget. Therefore a requirement of $466,700 remained to implement the resolutions and decisions of the Council. During the biennium, a consolidated statement of requirements arising from the continuing review by the Council and the potential absorptive capacity arising from the amended programme of work under the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 would be reported to the General Assembly upon a decision of the Council on its subsidiary machinery in response to General Assembly resolution 60/251. Additional appropriations in that regard were therefore not sought at the current time. The General Assembly might therefore wish to take note of the present report.

3. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/62/7/Add.34), said that the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should take note of the estimated requirements of $2,916,000 for 2008-2009 relating to resolutions and decisions of the Human Rights Council, on the understanding that such appropriations as might be necessary would be requested by the Secretary-General in a consolidated statement of requirements arising from the continuing review by the Council of its subsidiary machinery.

4. The procedure for presenting to the General Assembly the financial requirements arising from resolutions and decisions of the Council should be improved. The Assembly might therefore wish to request the Secretary-General to make proposals in that regard in time for the Committee to consider them in the context of its review of the consolidated statement.

5. **Mr. Yamada** (Japan) said that his delegation had voiced concern at the often negative impact of the programme budget implications of the resolutions and decisions of the Human Rights Council. With respect to the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, in December 2007 approximately $4.75 million, required as a result of resolutions of the Council, had been charged against the contingency fund. When the resolutions in question had been submitted to the Committee for its consideration, that amount had originally been approximately $12.4 million, equivalent to more than one third of the total contingency fund for the biennium 2008-2009.

6. While the Committee should take into account the fact that the Council was a new subsidiary body, its heavy dependence on the contingency fund made it clear that it must further enhance its financial discipline and improve its methods of presenting its financial requirements to the General Assembly. His delegation therefore underscored paragraph 104 of General Assembly resolution 62/236, which requested the Council to exercise greater financial discipline with due regard for regulation 5.6 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8), for example by seeking the most cost-effective measures to implement its mandates. Similarly, his delegation shared the view of the Advisory Committee that the procedure for presenting to the General Assembly the financial requirements arising from the resolutions and decisions of the Council should be improved.

7. The report of the Secretary-General (A/62/671) showed that the estimated requirements in respect of Council activities in 2008-2009 might be as high as $2.9 million, which exceeded the approved amount in the programme budget for the biennium by $466,700. As the unencumbered amount of the contingency fund was limited, requirements that exceeded the authorized amount should be absorbed in the context of the consolidated statement referred to in the report of the Secretary-General. His delegation therefore strongly hoped that the Secretary-General would affirm in his consolidated statement that the programme budget for 2008-2009 had substantial absorptive capacity and would not reveal further financial requirements.

Financing field missions of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/7/Add.33 and A/62/670)

8. **Ms. Van Buerle** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the Secretary-General's note on financing field missions of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/670), said that it had been submitted to facilitate the review by the Committee of the question of financing field missions of the Peacebuilding Commission. At the request of the Chairman of the Commission, in his letter dated 18 October 2007 addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/62/493), the General Committee had decided to recommend to the Assembly that item 10 of the agenda of the Assembly at its sixty-second session, entitled "Report of the Peacebuilding Commission", should be allocated to the Committee for the sole purpose of considering the question of financing field missions of the Commission. The note provided background information on the financing of field visits undertaken by the Commission in 2007. It also contained information on the preliminary estimated cost of anticipated field visits during the biennium 2008-2009, which would amount to $676,300.

9. In view of the allocation of the relevant agenda item to the Committee for the sole purpose of considering the question of the financing of such field missions, the Assembly might wish to advise the Commission, in addition to any other specific guidance which it wished to provide, that, should the field visits be conducted during the biennium 2008-2009, the preliminary cost under the programme budget for the biennium would amount to $676,300, to be absorbed to the greatest extent possible under section 3, Political affairs, and reported in the context of the performance reports. Any future requirements would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the relevant biennium.

10. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/62/7/Add.33), said that preliminary cost estimates for travel expenses in respect of field visits by members of the Peacebuilding Commission during the biennium 2008-2009, as set out in paragraph 12 of the note by the Secretary-General, amounted to $676,300. The Secretary-General indicated that that amount would be absorbed to the fullest extent possible under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium and reported in the context of the performance reports. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should concur with the Secretary-General's proposals as contained in paragraph 12 of his report.

11. The Advisory Committee noted that in the Commission's first year of operations, field visits had been funded through a combination of self-financing by some members and by other earmarked contributions. While the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 had mentioned that the Commission had decided to organize field visits, it had not included any resources for the participation of members of the Commission in such visits. As the field visits of the Commission had been funded outside the regular budget during the first year of operations and no determination had been made regarding the mode of financing for the visits, a statement of programme budget implications had not been provided. The Committee trusted that the provisions of rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, as well as procedures governing the inclusion of estimates in proposed programme budgets, would be strictly adhered to in future.

12. **Mr. Thomas** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that pursuant to resolution 60/180, which had finalized the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, Commission field visits had been funded through a combination of self-financing by some members and by other earmarked contributions. There was a need for Commission field missions to be funded from a stable source. The Group of 77 and China therefore welcomed the note by the Secretary-General on

financing field missions of the Peacebuilding Commission.

13. The Group reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that the Commission received enough financial resources for its vital work of helping countries emerging from conflict. It looked forward to constructive consideration of the resource requirements for the Commission. The Commission was crucial to efforts to strengthen the United Nations and deserved Members' full support.

14. **Mr. Sena** (Brazil) said that his delegation also looked forward to constructive consideration of the resource requirements for the Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission should receive the necessary resources to ensure its effective functioning.

15. **Mr. Safaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) requested clarification of paragraph 8 of the note by the Secretary-General, in particular details of the number of members expected to take part in each field visit. He also wished to know whether the countries in Asia and the Americas under consideration for the missions had been identified.

16. **Mr. Tawana** (South Africa) said that his Government attached great importance to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. The modest resource requirements would help the Commission to carry out its work effectively, including making full visits to Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. Countries emerging from conflict deserved the Committee's full support. His delegation looked forward to favourable consideration of the resource requirements of the Commission.

17. **Mr. Afifi** (Egypt) said that his delegation strongly supported the proposals of the Secretary-General on financing field missions for the Peacebuilding Commission. The modest resource requirements would help to ensure the effective functioning of the Commission.

18. **Ms. Van Buerle** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the date and location of the visits to countries in Asia and the Americas had not yet been determined. They were subject to referral of specific countries to the Peacekeeping Commission during the course of its work. With respect to the criteria for the number of members who would travel, the estimates were based on the experience of 2007; the specific members who would be travelling would be determined by the Commission. Based on the experience of 2007, it was estimated that there would be up to seven members. The Chairperson of the Commission sometimes travelled on his or her own.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.